

Message Text

SECRET

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42

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9243

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

S E C R E T JIDDA 6648

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SA, PFOR, PINT

SUBJECT: POSITION OF PRINCE FAHD

1. THE OCTOBER 14 ISSUE OF THE PARIS L'EXPRESS CARRIED A LONG ARTICLE ON THE EXCESSES OF PRINCE FAHD, "THE NEW KING FAROUK," AND HIS CRONY ADNA KOSHOGGI, THE ORGANIZER OF PRINCELY PLEASURES." SUBSEQUENT ARTICLES APPEARED IN TIME MAGAZINE AND THE BRITISH AND GERMAN PRESS. THE PRESS WAS CENSORED HERE BUT COPIES OF ALL THE DELETED PORTIONS CIRCULATED THROUGH THE KINGDOM WITH EXTRAORDINARY RAPIDITY.

2. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THE KING WAS DEEPLY DISPLEASED BY FAHD'S ACTIONS AND ESPECIALLY BY THE PUBLICITY, BUT HE HAS NOT SHOWN TO FAHD OR TO ANYONE IN THE KINGDOM ANY CONCRETE SIGN OF THIS DISPLEASEURE. OMAR SAQQAF, THE FOREIGN MINISTER, AND ZAKI YAMANI, THE
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MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, NEITHER OF WHOM IS A STRONG

DEFENDER OF FAHD, TOLD ME LAST WEEK THAT IT WOULD BE TOTALLY UNCHARACTERISTIC OF THE KING TO REVEAL HIS FEELINGS TO ANYONE. WHAT HE WOULD DO IF HE WERE TRULY AND DEEPLY DISPLEASED, THEY SAID, WOULD BE TO DROP SMALL HINTS; TO SHOW SMALL SNUBS TO FAHD; AND TO START SHOWING FAVORS AND PAYING MORE DEFERENCE TO KHALID, THE CROWN PRINCE; ABDALLAH, THE HEAD OF THE NATIONAL GUARD; AND TO SULTAN, MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND FULL BROTHER OF FAHD. BOTH SAID NOTHING OF THE SORT HAD HAPPENED. YAMANI TOLD ME NOVEMBER 11 THAT HE HAD JUST SPENT THREE HOURS ALONE WITH THE KING; YAMANI DELIBERATELY RAISED FAHD'S NAME TO TEST THE KING'S REACTION. THE KING DID REMARK BITTERLY ABOUT FAHD'S FOOLISHNESS IN CANNES, AND PARTICULARLY ABOUT HIS COMPANION KOSHOGGI, BUT HE GAVE NO INDICATION THAT HE WAS GOING TO TAKE ANY DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

3. FAHD, PERHAPS IN ORDER TO FORESTALL ANY ROYAL MOVE, HAS BEEN MOST ACTIVE SINCE HIS RETURN. HE ATTENDED THE MEETING WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER ON NOVEMBER 6. HE HEADS AND CONTROLS THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' MEETINGS; HE HAS ISSUED A SERIES OF ORDERS TO THE MINISTRIES OF PETROLEUM, PLANNING, COMMERCE, AGRICULTURE, THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE, AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, TO THE POWERFUL MINISTRY OF FINANCE. HE HAS INSTRUCTED THEM TO PREPARE REPORTS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MEANS OF CONTROLLING INFLATION IN THE KINGDOM. ACCORDING TO YAMANI, ALL ARE COMPLYING.

4. YAMANI TOLD ME IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SCANDAL BROKE THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD TAKE FAHD TWO YEARS OF HARD WORK TO RESTORE HIS POSITION IN THE KINGDOM. HE NOW THINKS IT WILL TAKE MUCH LESS.

5. COMMENT: SAQQAF'S AND YAMANI'S REMARKS ABOUT FAHD'S PROSPECTS ARE ENCOURAGING, ALTHOUGH WE CAN ASSUME--GIVEN THE INTENSE PRIVATISM OF THE ROYAL FAMILY--THE KING WOULD NOT OPEN HIS HEART ON SUCH A MATTER, EVEN WITH SUCH TRUSTED COMMONERS. FAHD, HOWEVER, HAS CANCELLED HIS TRIP TO FRANCE; HE WILL STAY HOME AND APPARENTLY WILL WORK MUCH HARDER. IF HE CAN NOW GET RID OF HIS FALSTAFFS AND

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TRANSFORM HIMSELF QUICKLY FROM PRINCE HAL TO HENRY THE FIFTH--EVEN BEFORE THE DEATH OF FAISAL--THE PROBLEMS OF THE SUCCESSION WILL BE GREATLY EASED. FAHD IS STILL CLEARLY THE MOST POPULAR PRINCE IN THE KINGDOM.
AKINS

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